Freelance Photojournalists and Photo Editors

Learning and adapting in a (mostly faceless) virtual world

T. J. Thomson

FREELANCE PHOTOJOURNALISTS AND PHOTO EDITORS
Learning and adapting in a (mostly faceless) virtual world

T. J. Thomson

Since 2005, journalism has experienced a series of seismic changes due to economic factors, technological changes, and shifting priorities and news values. Photojournalism has been particularly affected by technology and business model changes, leading more outlets to rely on often geographically remote freelancers at the expense of dedicated photo staffs. These remote working environments and the mediated communication they necessitate have profound impacts for photojournalists' development, roles, and responsibilities. Through in-depth interviews with photo editors and freelancers at top media outlets in the United States and guided by professional socialization, mentoring, and learning theories, this study explores what happens when the photojournalist–editor relationship is strained, mediated, or severed. It also seeks to examine what impact mediated interactions have on photographers' learning and the quality of the media they produce. The findings reveal that the post-digital freelance model is more linear than the hierarchical staffer model and has a positive influence on workforce diversity, albeit at the expense of freelancers' professional development and their opportunities to receive feedback from editors.

KEYWORDS   freelance; freelance photojournalist; mediated communication; photo editor feedback; photojournalism; photojournalist development; virtual work environments

Introduction

Journalism is in a near-constant state of flux. New technology, economic factors, and cultural shifts affect almost all areas of the field, yet photojournalism—the "visual pursuit of objective reality as we now know it—the most accurate recording of life events a human being can make" (Newton 2013)—is perhaps the subfield that has experienced the most profound transformation. For example, the job market for visual journalists in the United States was more than halved between 1999 and 2015 (ASNE 2015) and countless media outlets have entirely eliminated or drastically shrunk their dedicated photo staffs (Anderson 2013). These reductions have not been proportionate. In 2015, *The Wall Street Journal*, one of the largest US media outlets by circulation, employed about 2000 reporters (Smith 2015) but only a single staff photographer.[1] In response to these changes and diminished or non-existent photo staffs, some photo editors solicit crowd-sourced visuals, embed images from social media, pull content from wire services, subscribe to creative agencies, task their reporters to acquire visuals, or, most commonly, outsource work to often geographically remote freelancers (Allan 2015). The potential for interaction between content creators

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

and the publishers in some of these solutions is nonexistent. In others, interaction is possible but is often accomplished through mediated or non face-to-face channels.

Past research has explored digitization and technological innovation's impact on photojournalism (Greenwood and Reinardy 2011; Klein-Avraham and Zvi 2014; Russial 2000; Russial and Wanta 1998); however, little, if any research attention has been given to how freelance photojournalists and editors interact through mediated channels or work in virtual environments and the influence this has on communication, learning, professional development, mentoring, and diversity. Through in-depth interviews with photo editors and freelance photographers, this study examines perceptions of the working relationships between freelance photographers and photo editors. Guided by this umbrella question, it also illuminates how prevalent freelance use is at major media outlets in the United States; maps how working with an editor face-to-face compares to working with one remotely; explores how remote interactions affect photographer learning and development; and analyzes how the shift from a staff-based to a freelance model impacts the journalism industry.

Literature Review

By first exploring shifts in the visual journalism landscape and then delving into professional socialization and its key components of mentorship, role relations, and adaptation, a better understanding of the photo editor–photographer relationship can be obtained and used as a framework to support this research.

Shifts in the Visual Journalism Landscape

Since 2005, journalism has experienced a series of considerable changes due to economic factors, technological issues, and shifting priorities and news values. The current US media landscape exists in an imbalanced labor market where falling revenues, the internet, other digital technologies, and tension between the quality of the product and the cost to produce it have profoundly impacted journalists' roles and routines (Siegelbaum and Thomas 2016). Digitization has particularly impacted photojournalists' routines and practices (Klein-Avraham and Zvi 2014) and the flexibility provided by virtual work environments has encouraged photojournalists to stay away from the newsroom, which decreases the potential for peer-learning and in-depth feedback. Some scholars (see, e.g., Klein-Avraham and Zvi 2014) link digitization to deteriorating job security and working conditions for photojournalists while others (see, e.g., Green 2006; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011) note that cultural production industries are suffering from optimization pressure and a shift to contingent labor. Though media production has become more "democratic" (Lewis, Kaufhold, and Lasorsa 2010), it is still a resource-heavy endeavor with implications for remote, underdeveloped, and resource-poor areas and those who live in them.

Membership in professional visual associations has also dropped in the digital age. In 1984, for example, the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) boasted a membership of 7000 (Bethune 1984). Three decades later, that number has been more than halved, a fact bemoaned in a March 2016 interview with an NPPA official:

I am very disappointed in how many photographers no longer belong to any association that speaks on their behalf or take the work we do for granted. From my perspective photographers are being squeezed from all sides—being interfered with, harassed and sometimes arrested for doing nothing more than photographing or recording in public—to losing their staff jobs—to being offered onerous freelance agreements which seek to take all their rights for little compensation. (Osterreicher 2016, n.p.)

Thus, a marked difference exists between the practices of photojournalists before and after the digital revolution in terms of their routines, workflows, sources of feedback, and memberships.

Theoretical Framework

Using professional socialization and resocialization (Bragg 1976; Goldenberg and Iwasiw 1993) as a broad theoretical framework, its key conceptual components, including mentorship, role relations, and adaptation, will be analyzed from several perspectives. Traditional mentoring literature will be examined alongside mentoring alternatives and a discussion of virtual mentoring's implications while self-directed learning theory informs the discussion of adaption and role relations in the shifting journalism environment.

Traditional Mentoring Importance and Functions

Researchers have studied photojournalism education as an academic subject (Heller 1991; Horrell 1961; Kenney 1987; Smith and Mendelson 1996) but have yet to understand the feedback, learning, and mentoring process from the perspectives of active practitioners in the post-digital era. While no peer-reviewed literature has yet explored these areas, a 2012 phenomenology-based dissertation identified mentoring as a chief element of photographer learning and knowledge construction (Nolan 2012) and thus provides a useful starting point.

No relationship in young adulthood, encompassing ages 20–39 (Bleyer and Barr 2009), is more important than that of the mentor (Levinson 1978). Developmental relationships have been referred to by various terms, including mentor, sponsor, and patron (Dalton et al. 1977; Kanter 1977; Shapiro, Haseltine, and Rowe 1978) and are essential for both career and personal growth. Regardless of type or classification, opportunities for frequent and open interaction are essential for developmental relationships to occur and be beneficial (Kram 1988). Mentoring functions have been classified into two groups: career and psychosocial (Kram 1988). Career functions are related to occupational development and include sponsorship, exposure, visibility, coaching, protection, and providing challenging work assignments. Psychosocial functions enhance professional competence, identity, or effectiveness, and include role modeling, acceptance, confirmation, counseling, and friendship. Mentoring relationships are strongest when they incorporate aspects of both functions (Kram 1988) yet many of these benefits are unattainable or impractical without face-to-face interaction, such as that provided historically by iconic visual sponsors and mentors Roy Stryker, Howard Chapnick, and Robert Capa.

Sponsorship, or a senior individual's public support for a junior individual—in this case, a photo editor's advocacy for a photojournalist—is critical for organizational advancement and is the most frequently observed career function (Kram 1988). When younger

individuals lack a sponsor, they are likely to be overlooked for promotions regardless of performance. Organizational type and structure can be an obstacle to mentoring (Kram 1988), such as when organizations emphasize bottom-line results at the cost of employee development. As organizational structures have shifted and dedicated photo staffs have been slashed or entirely cut (Anderson 2013), it is logical to explore other alternatives to mentoring that freelance photographers can use to supplement their lack of face-to-face interaction with a supervisor.

Mentoring Alternatives

For decades, peers have served as an alternative source to the primary developmental relationships that mentors provide (Kram 1988). Peer developmental relationships are popular because one usually has more peers than direct supervisors and because these types of relationships encourage communication and collaboration that sometimes are not encouraged in traditional mentor relationships due to hierarchical distance.

Peer relationships also include career and psychosocial functions (Kram 1988). Career functions in peer relationships include opportunities for information sharing, career strategizing, and work-related feedback, while psychosocial functions in peer relations can include providing confirmation, emotional support, personal feedback, and friendship. Peer relationships are generally more available than mentoring relationships and usually last longer. On the downside, competition among peers can disrupt or eliminate the potential for career or psychosocial functions to materialize (Kram 1988).

Considering the importance of mentoring broadly, and the importance of feedback to personal development, specifically, this study poses the following as the first research question:

> **RQ1:** What are the sources and channels that freelance photographers use to obtain feedback on their visuals and enhance their professional development?

Virtual Mentoring

Virtual mentoring, also known as electronic mentoring or telementoring, is defined as mutually beneficial relationships between individuals which provides learning, career, or emotional support (Ragins and Kram 2007). Virtual mentoring can be accomplished solely through computer-mediated communication (CMC), primarily through CMC, or with CMC as a supplement (Ensher et al. 2003). The frequency of communication or interaction impacts mentoring effectiveness and participant satisfaction, as more frequent interaction generally translates to higher satisfaction (Ensher et al. 2007; Lewis 2002).

Benefits of virtual mentoring include its ability to transcend internal and external organizational boundaries, geographical limitations, and its more egalitarian nature compared to face-to-face interactions (Ragins and Kram 2007). Other benefits include a more forgiving environment for those with poor social skills or low assertiveness (Hamilton and Scandura 2003). However, using virtual means to work and communicate also has drawbacks. These include lessened attachment to the employing organization, heightened cross-cultural communication difficulties, and potential feelings of employee isolation (Ragins and Kram 2007).

Miscommunications are more likely to happen in virtual communication (Ensher et al. 2003) due to its sometimes asynchronous nature and potential inability to relay nonverbal communication. It takes longer to develop virtual relationships and people generally feel less committed to online relationships compared to face-to-face ones (Bierema and Merriam 2002). Additionally, individuals are less likely to acquire implicit knowledge required for further development (Workman, Kahnweiler, and Bommer 2003); are less likely to observe role modeling in virtual environments (Ensher and Murphy 2007); and are more likely to experience disinhibition in virtual environments (Ensher et al. 2003; Hamilton and Scandura 2003), which can have profound impacts on civility, professionalism, and self-presentation.

Considering how markedly different virtual interactions are from face-to-face ones, the second research question asks:

> **RQ2:** How does mediated interaction affect freelance photojournalists' learning and development?

Self-directed Learning Theory

Self-directed learning is a process where individuals accept responsibility and initiative for their own knowledge acquisition self-development (Merriam 2001). Early models of self-directed learning were largely linear (Knowles 1975; Tough 1979), while more recent models (Danis 1992) are less so and take into account learning strategies, learning process phases, the content, the learner, and his or her environment. Whereas a dependent learner might appreciate or benefit from immediate correction, a self-directed learner might benefit from discovery learning where knowledge is gained through trial and error rather than through sometimes arbitrary valuations given by an instructor or supervisor. In a journalistic context, this theory provides utility and insight in situations where less work is happening under direct supervision and less feedback is being given by photo editors. It also informs the study's third research question, which asks:

> **RQ3:** How has the shift from a staff-based to a freelance model, and therefore, to a self-directed learning model, impacted the visual journalism industry and the roles of the freelancer photographers and photo editors employed in it?

Method

This study used in-depth, semi-structured interviews with both descriptive and explanatory questions to provide more contextual, comprehensive, and robust understanding (Sandelowski 1991). Interview methods are an ideal method for capturing rich, deep understanding of little-studied phenomena (Patton 2005) because they are interactive and allow for follow-up questions and clarifications, as needed. A pilot of the interview was developed and administered with three photojournalists prior to data collection.

Data Pool and Sampling

After obtaining Institutional Review Board approval in early 2016, personalized recruitment scripts were individually sent to 50 visual media professionals, including

eight photo editors and 42 freelance photojournalists. Past research (Gillath et al. 2008) showed that personalization and individualization boost potential respondents' willingness to participate. Using a purposive sampling model (Miles and Huberman 1994), potential respondents with "freelance photographer," "freelance photojournalist," or "photo editor" in their titles were identified through LinkedIn's occupation search and, after a review of their online presence to ensure they fit the inclusion criteria, were invited to participate in the study. Respondents identified other potential interviewees, so chain referral sampling (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981) was also used. In all, 25 freelancers and photo editors consented to take part in the study.

These 25 respondents represented more than 75 media organizations employing more than 2000 freelancers and at least 119 photo editors.[2] Thus, while some of the explanatory questions were specific to the individuals answering them and their unique experiences, the descriptive questions applied to hundreds of photo editors and thousands of freelancers in the United States and abroad. The photo editors interviewed represented major media organizations in different geographic regions of the United States, including *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Rolling Stone*, *Mashable*, and *The Washington Post*.

In addition to the above media organizations, the freelance photojournalists interviewed have worked for a vast array of national and international media outlets, including Reuters, Bloomberg, *TIME*, *The Denver Post*, *National Geographic*, *WIRED*, *New York Magazine*, *The Virginian-Pilot*, *Dallas Advocate Magazine*, *Sports Illustrated*, *The Kansas City Star*, *The Boston Globe*, *BuzzFeed*, *Der Spiegel*, *GQ*, *Le Figaro*, *The (London) Times*, *The Miami Herald*, *Mother Jones*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *USA Today*.

Freelancers' characteristics.   As demographic characteristics can influence journalists' perspectives and approaches (Shoemaker 2013), all participants were asked to provide their age, gender, nationality, race, and sexuality. The interviewed freelancers' average age was 28.9 years. The range was from 22 to 40 years. Five identified as female and 14 identified as male. Thirteen respondents identified as American, three identified as Mexican, one identified as South African, one identified as Palestinian, and one identified as Ukrainian. All identified as straight and the respondents' average number of years in the visual news industry was 6.3 years.

Photo editors' characteristics.   The interviewed photo editors' average age was 40.3 years. The range was from 25 to 58 years. Three identified as male and three identified as female. Four identified as American and two identified as Chinese. Five identified as straight and one identified as gay. The photo editors spent, on average, 12.7 years in the visual news industry.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interviews began in February 2016 and concluded two months later. Because each interview provided additional insight and the data were analyzed concurrently during the interviewing period, Small's (2009) sequential interviewing approach, which draws on Yin's (2003) multiple-case study logic, was used. This approach is not representative by design and aims for saturation by letting each interview build upon the

previous ones so that an increasingly accurate understanding of one's research questions develops.

Eleven interviews were conducted by phone or video chat, which allowed for real-time probing and follow-up, as appropriate. Fourteen interviews were conducted by email, at the request of the respondent because of their time constraints or their desire to reflect and respond to the questions at their own pace. The initial interview instrument consisted of 8 questions but grew to 13 questions. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and then analyzed using ATLAS.ti qualitative data analysis software, which allows data to be evaluated and sorted thematically. In all, 51,317 words, or about 129 pages of single-spaced text set in 12-point, Times New Roman font, were analyzed.

Using the constant comparative approach, interviews were conducted and analyzed until data saturation (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1998) was reached; that is, until enough respondents were interviewed that the data became redundant. This redundancy ensured comprehension and completeness (Morse et al. 2002) and boosted the findings' trustworthiness. The study's validity was further bolstered by examining interactions from both the freelancers' and photo editors' points of view, from incorporating geographic diversity in the sample, and from drawing on a rich mix of demographic characteristics and occupational affiliations.

Findings

Of the 25 total interviewees, six were photo editors who represented some of the largest and most influential media outlets in America. Between editor interviews and impressions from freelancers, many of whom had worked with multiple editors at each outlet, an understanding began to develop about how prevalent freelancer use is in the American news media market and how mediated communication affects work and development. At the time of the study, *The New York Times* employed 52 photo editors and relied on freelancers to provide 50 percent or more of its visuals; *The Wall Street Journal* employed 24 photo editors and relied on freelancers for 66 percent of its features imagery and 33 percent of its news imagery; *The Washington Post* employed 19 photo editors and relied on freelancers for 80 percent of its international news imagery, 50 percent of its political news imagery, and between 60 and 80 percent of its national news imagery. Both photo editors and freelancers at each of these outlets said that post-shoot feedback on visuals was virtually nonexistent. The exception was, in the case of a *Wall Street Journal* photo editor, who, for specific questions, and for some of the other outlets, when the editor had a personal relationship with the freelancer, would provide feedback and tips to improve their development.

> **RQ1:** What are the sources and channels that freelance photographers use to obtain feedback on their visuals and enhance their professional development?

The first research question explored how freelance photojournalists obtain feedback on their visuals. The respondents identified six sources and five channels of feedback. In order of importance and use, they were (1) other photographers, (2) workshops and portfolio reviews, (3) non-photographers, (4) mediated feedback from editors, (5) pilgrimages, and (6) online sources. Respondents said they obtained this feedback through face-to-face interaction, interest-specific online groups, email messages, phone conversations, and social media posts.

Feedback from Other Photographers

Nineteen freelancers said they most often obtained feedback on their visuals from other photographers, some of whom were in direct competition with them and others who were in different markets. Some freelancers took a more casual, social approach for obtaining feedback while others adopted more formal methods.

> I have a group of friends that all have a similar way of making pictures or a similar style to the way we make pictures that I communicate with. We actually have a Slack account set up to share ideas, get thoughts on work, share new books we are interested in, alert each other of opportunities or deadlines coming up. It's really, really important as a freelancer to have a group of people who are willing to listen and give honest feedback. Otherwise you're just alone in your own head. (Freelancer 14)[3]

Freelancers said they would talk to other freelancers at events they were both covering, they would send screenshots of potential edits to photo friends to ask their advice, and would invite more seasoned, experience photographers out for a coffee or beer to "pick their brains." The freelancers said local chapters of professional associations, such as the American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP) or the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) provided members with opportunities to show their work to fellow photographers, but that these events were more social than educational in nature and that they went to them for the community aspects rather than for critical feedback.

Feedback from Workshops and Portfolio Reviews

Four photographers said they valued workshops for their networking and educational value. Photographers often said workshops, especially the week-long variety, such as the Eddie Adams Workshop or Missouri Photo Workshop, were transformative in changing their perspective and also in their ability to introduce freelancers to big industry names who might later help with feedback, coaching, or employment opportunities. Two photographers said they relied on portfolio reviews for feedback, though these can often be expensive if they are not won from contests or competitions.

> I'm going to this thing called Photo Fest next month. I paid $900 to go to one of these portfolios reviews. As you can imagine, it's a big investment. You go and you pay that amount of money to meet people in person. They review your work but getting that face time to sit down with people and getting them to look at your stuff is valuable enough that they charge a lot of money to do it. (Freelancer 12)

Feedback from Non-photographers

Six freelancers said they sought feedback from non-photographers, sometimes ones who were romantic partners and sometimes others who were friends or business colleagues. These freelancers said they were more interested in hearing how an amateur might react to an image and thought non-photographers' criticisms held less weight and thus, were not as disheartening as hearing similar feedback from peers or professionals. "If I bounce nascent ideas to someone in the industry and get an adverse reaction I am more inclined to abandon the idea" (Freelancer 4).

Mediated Feedback from Editors

Post-shoot feedback from editors was almost nonexistent. "We use freelancers, and we do not coach them or provide feedback in any way, so there's little communication other than confirming we received their pictures" (Photo editor 1). Freelancers said they usually only heard from editors when an assignment was offered or if something went wrong, but hardly ever afterward. "After the story is shot, nothing really happens after that. There's no chatting about the shoot afterwards, when you're freelance. That just never happens for me" (Photographer 10).

Another agreed. "They are completely hands off and do not often explain what they probably think is assumed (for their staff, perhaps, and so they ignore important details that freelancers do not have knowledge of), especially regarding workflow issues" (Freelancer 6). "This can hurt assignments in both directions." In all, 14 of the freelancers interviewed said they received virtually no feedback from their editors during assignments unless they explicitly asked for feedback about a specific question or paid for it, in the case of two photographers who hired an editor as an editing consultant.

Feedback During In-person Trips to Editing Meccas

Three photographers said they regularly travel (sometimes all the way across the country) from their home bases to New York City at least once a year to drop by newsrooms, network, and get face-time with editors. One photo editor termed this "the pilgrimage" and described it like this:

> Most of the bigger freelancers, about every year, will go to New York and [Washington] D.C. to check in with editors. A lot of it ends up being just to get more face time; to develop a relationship. They'll come around, send an email blast around, say "Oh, hey. I'm in town. Do you have time to visit? Check out some of my stuff." (Photo editor 3)

Another freelancer said she, while in New York for a meeting with a photo editor, got invited to *The New York Times*'s holiday party. "You can't pay for that," she said. "It really does matter that you can make that face time with people. It makes a big difference" (Freelancer 12).

Online Feedback

Seeking feedback online was the least popular option. The three photographers who mentioned it said that they published work online primarily for publicity and that online feedback tended to be low quality.

> I'm not big on social media. I don't post as much as I should or I don't have the time. Whatever feedback I get on social media, I don't really take as feedback. I've shot some amazing stories and they'll get like 25 likes on Instagram. I know it's better than that because I'm happy with the work and whoever I shot it for is happy with the work. That's really what matters. (Freelancer 19)

> **RQ2:** How does mediated interaction affect freelance photojournalists' learning and development?

Considering that mediated interactions are markedly different from face-to-face ones, the second research question explored how mediated interactions affect freelance photojournalists' learning and development. The respondents identified five positive outcomes and five negative outcomes from such interactions.

Positive Outcomes of Mediated Communication

Positive outcomes resulting from communicating and working in mediated formats included more diversity, less opportunity for unprofessional behavior, greater comfort, more editorial freedom, and an archivable record of interactions.

Diversity.   The photographers said the greatest benefit of mediated communication channels was its impact on diversity. In contrast to traditional work environments where one's workforce is largely stable and unchanging, the freelance world can be quite organic and flexible. Editors can use institutional databases, geolocation-based photography apps, such as Blink, or business-oriented social media sites, such as LinkedIn, to find a freelancer with specific skills, backgrounds, locations, or characteristics.

> If anything, the internet has made it easy for non-traditional photojournalists to get a foot in the door. If you have a website and your information is up-to-date, people can find you and you don't have to be in the old boys' club. (Photo editor 3)

Mediated communication, and the internet in particular, democratized the photojournalism landscape. Respondents said some stories cannot be told without "insider" access, that is, without freelancers who share characteristics with their subjects, and that the internet helps editors find these freelancers.

> In general, I think, photojournalism became more diverse with the proliferation of Internet. If we look at photojournalism of the twentieth century, it is White people from wealthy countries (USA, Western Europe) travelling the world telling their compatriots how the "others" live. Photo editors in world capitals did not address local photographers (with rare exceptions), because there was no easy way they could look them up. Now there are so many great local photojournalists in every country! They are of different races and of different nationalities, and they are insiders to the stories that they are telling. (Freelancer 3)

Safer environment.   Photo editors and freelancers alike said that mediated channels lessened the risk of inappropriate behaviors, discrimination, and stereotyping. The respondents said inappropriate relationships were less likely to develop when communicating in mediated formats compared to working face-to-face. "Men want to sleep with me. I have had a lot of mentoring with males, and part of the reason I was being mentored was because it ended up being a personal relationship" (Freelancer 10). Another freelancer noted the "practice of freelance photographers having sex with photo editors (or older influential photographers) to get assignments" (Freelancer 3) but due to the geographic barriers present between most freelancers and their editors, this likely would not be an issue in a mediated environment.

A photo editor said another benefit was that demographic characteristics are not usually apparent in email, the medium in which she communicates most.

> Honestly because most of my interaction with freelance photographers is done via email, I hardly even know what gender they are or consider it. I've worked a few times with a photographer named 'Alex' and it wasn't until maybe the second or third time I worked with that person that I realized it could be either a male or female. I couldn't visually identify their gender or use voice tone (via phone) to decide who it was I was talking to. And honestly it wasn't that important to me. (Photo editor 4)

Less intimidating.   Three freelancers said they thought online communication was less intimidating compared to face-to-face interactions and that virtual environments do not have the same kind of social expectations that are present in the physical world. These freelancers said it was easier to receive feedback online because the freelancer did not have to see the photo editor's face. Another photographer said that social constructs present in the physical world do not always transfer to the virtual world.

> I've worked with people of all ages, all races, religions, sexual orientations. I think when you're dealing with someone digitally and you haven't met them before, even those kinds of constructs are totally taken away. I don't want to say when you meet someone in person you judge them on their looks or whatnot, but, people are probably a little more open-minded working with someone digitally. In some ways, the playing field is more even when you're working with someone digitally. (Freelancer 5)

More permanence.   Both freelancers and photo editors recognized that face-to-face interactions, while ideal for learning, were also transient. Two freelancers said they preferred an assignment email from editors rather than a phone call because they had a record of the conversation and what the editor's expectations were. Another appreciated the archivability of mediated communication formats.

> While we [the photographer and the photo editor] had only had a few face-to-face conversations, there were hundreds of emails back and forth between him and me and others in the newsroom talking about his stories and his approach. There were so many lessons I learned from him that I still have a record of, because it had mostly go on through email and text. I was just thinking, this is pretty incredible I have almost this treasure trove of conversations I can remember, things I learned from him. (Photo editor 2)

Greater editorial control.   Though it was mentioned by only a single photographer, working through mediated communication formats allowed one freelancer a greater measure of editorial control compared to his staff counterparts. Depending on the outlet, some staff photographers did not have any editorial control as their editors went through their outtakes and picked images for publication. The remote working conditions of freelancers, in contrast, meant that they have much more control over which images they sent for review and were subsequently published.

Negative outcomes of mediated communication.   Respondents said mediated communication affected the quality and presence of feedback, lowered the amount of personality that accompanied a communication, encouraged isolation, made mentoring more difficult to accomplish, lessened the accountability of both freelancer and editor, encouraged transactional rather than relational interactions, and increased the frequency of miscommunications.

Impact on feedback and communication. Nineteen respondents said that mediated communication affected the quality and presence of feedback. It takes more time to provide feedback through mediated formats than it does to provide the same feedback face-to-face, they said. Also, a photo editor cannot point to a screen and easily illustrate issues to the photographer like they can when they are in the same room. Rather, they have to spend time annotating screenshots or thumbnails to illustrate their points. As a result, many editors provide no feedback or are brief to the point of enigma.

> I shoot for *The New York Times* all the time. I know the editors pretty well. I'm not sure if they're particularly overworked. I'm going to assume that. For certain editors, I'll get an email that will have, literally, three words or four words in it. (Freelancer 10)

Another photographer who also freelances for *The New York Times* agreed. "I'll just speak for *The New York Times*—they're just like, they don't have a lot of time. Every interaction is an act of efficiency" (Freelancer 12). Freelancers and photo editors alike said they only ever took the time to provide feedback when a personal rather than only professional relationship existed between the two parties.

> I did find that, if I had a personal relationship with a photographer, I would try to go an extra mile and write that extra email or make a phone call and really try to give extra feedback. Again, not always possible. (Photo editor 2)

Misunderstandings and miscommunications were also more prevalent online compared to face-to-face interactions, six respondents said.

> It is more difficult to communicate ideas and understand exactly what people are looking for when there's a total lack of face-to-face contact. I have even noticed problems with email over phone contact. Skype would be nice but I have yet to have an editor contact me over any type of video call. (Freelancer 18)

Impact on personality and self-presentation. About half of the respondents said their personalities did not come through at all or were negatively impacted when communicating in mediated formats.

> It's sometimes very difficult to get a read on someone, their personality or what they might be like, just digitally. It's tough. There's editors I've worked with that I thought were mean or kind of rude or gruff, but then, when I met them in person, they're the nicest people. Sometimes, you're talking with them on the phone and there's a deadline, a really tight deadline, or they've got a million things going on, so it's not that they're being short with you, they just have to work and speak in a quick and efficient manner because they're up against a deadline or trying to get a million things done. Sometimes it's hard to get a read on someone's personality and get to know them and build a good rapport with them digitally. Email is definitely the least personal form of communication. When you're talking on the phone, it's a little better, because you have voice. You can get someone's inflections, tone, their pacing, that kind of thing, but there's really no substitute for the first person, face-to-face interaction. (Freelancer 5)

This format's effect on personality dramatically inhibited freelancers' ability to make personal connections with editors and find and maintain a relationship with the advocate "sponsor" that Kram (1988) identified as being so crucial to career advancement. Some freelancers said fear affected how much of their personality they reveal.

> I take my personal work very seriously but I wouldn't say I am a serious person. I think this is because I want my work to speak for itself and I don't want to inject myself into it at all. I know of a lot of photographers, however, whose essence and their work is one and the same. I don't think I am comfortable being familiar and jocular over mediated formats for fear of miscommunication, especially over email and chat, so I often play it safe. (Freelancer 4)

The roles and expectations of journalists also came into play. Objectivity and the desire for neutrality affected some freelancers' and editors' self-presentations.

> In journalism there's the idea of neutrality and lack of bias. I've been thinking about that stuff a lot while I've been covering the Black Lives Matter movement. You're sort of trying to maintain a little bit of that, "neutrality," even though no one's maintaining that. Nobody's an unbiased person. I do think there's some reticence to get to know each other really well. (Freelancer 12)

Unlike in a physical environment where one's investments, affiliations, and biases can be more visible, virtual environments can be endlessly styled and manipulated so that these characteristics are masked or managed to the communicators' liking.

Isolation.   Five freelancers said working in virtual environments left them feeling isolated, alienated, and devoid of institutional support. "Interaction with editors is really important, but I think the other piece that's very important is colleagues. As a freelancer, you don't have an office to go to and you can get really isolated in your work" (Freelancer 12). Another said he had to hone his own voice so feedback became less necessary than it was when he was an emerging photographer.

Other disadvantages the respondents identified included that less accountability existed online compared to face-to-face interactions and that mentoring was hard, if not impossible, to accomplish when not done in person.

> **RQ3:** How has the shift from a staff-based to a freelance model, and therefore, to a self-directed learning model, impacted the visual journalism industry and the roles of the freelancer photographers and photo editors employed in it?

In order to better understand industry changes and implications for practitioners, RQ3 explored how the shift from a staff-based to a freelance model impacts the media environment and those who work in it. Respondents said this shift increased market competitiveness, lessened the value and importance of photo editors, and forced the industry to reconsider employee, in this case, independent contractor, development.

Increased market competitiveness.   In the traditional staffer model that dominated through the early 2000s, photojournalists were employees who enjoyed the benefits of stable employment and organizational support, including health benefits and the use of employer-owned equipment (Dorfman 2002). As the freelancer model began to take hold in the succeeding years, freelancers bore the burden of financing their own equipment, paying for their own insurance, and navigating the job insecurity and other pressures independent contractors face.

With day rates at *The New York Times* between $200 and 250, depending on location ("Who Pays Photographers (and How Much)" 2016), media outlets obtain all the benefits of

a highly skilled and equipped workforce without paying the cost of full-time employees. Thus, the market has become more competitive and cutthroat due to a larger pool of talent desperately vying for exposure and recognition, often at the expense of a decent paycheck.

> With freelance, you're on survival mode. I don't want to sound pessimistic, but I'm jobless. I don't have a job. You're always hunting for the next job. As much as you want to say, "This is my rate and I'm not working for less than that," that's the way to shoot yourself in the foot. That's what I find difficult in terms of being a freelance photojournalist—there's no set rate. You have an idea, a ballpark figure, of how much you should make, but publications, even the big ones, offer $200 for 10, 12 hours of work with a subject. It's a great opportunity. That's the reason you shoot for publications like *The New York Times* or *Rolling Stone*. You're not really shooting for them. It helps, obviously, but it's opening the door to something bigger. I'll take jobs where I make very little money but I know it will open doors down the road. Sometimes I even shoot for free. (Freelancer 19)

By offering exposure rather than a sustainable wage, the freelancer model devalues a photographer's work and forces them to be innovative and entrepreneurial in order to survive.

> I'm working on a self-published book right now that I'm planning on making money on. I can't say I would promise you I'm going to make money on it. Journalism is not really paying my bills. How do you actually make a living is a really good question and, in journalism, people don't really talk about it that much because it sometimes seems like you're not being successful, but I know everybody who is doing this is doing other stuff as a freelancer. They just might not be admitting it. (Freelancer 12)

Lessened institutional responsibility for employee development.   In the staffer model, photographer development was, depending on the organization size and complexity, implicitly or explicitly seen as a joint venture and responsibility. Media outlets, especially bigger ones, would pay for photographers to receive training and to attend professional development opportunities knowing that such an arrangement was symbiotic.

> I think the paper allowed people to go to workshops and stuff. I think it was generally encouraged to improve. I mean, you're kind of investing in people. That was kind of the case here. *The L.A. Times* was a destination paper. It's not like you're going to get better and leave, you're going to get better and stay. Most people don't leave. You figure, if you hire someone, they're going to be there a while, so you want them to get better. (Photo editor 5)

This attitude seems to be shifting under the freelancer model. Seven respondents said photographer development was solely the freelancer's concern.

> The thing is, and this comes out from a lot of discussions with fellow photojournalists … photo editors became lazy. They don't need to look for stories anymore. They don't need to help photographers grow either. There are too many freelancers out there with great content, and a photo editor just has to pick one or two, and publish it in a newspaper, weekly or monthly magazine. (Freelancer 3)

Another freelancer attributed the shift in responsibility to deadlines and budgets.

> Theoretically, photographer development is of mutual concern, but I believe it is mostly the photographer's concern. The industry is very competitive and as far as an outlet is concerned there are many more that could take the place of the photographer. That sounds quite cynical, but I think there is some truth insofar as there are deadlines and bottom lines to think about and there is no time to waste. (Freelancer 4)

Altered value and importance of photo editors.   The freelancer model largely strips photo editors of any mentoring responsibility or opportunity and makes freelancers their own self-editors who are reliant on external sources for feedback and educational development. Five freelancers said photo editors were not essential to the quality of the visuals because the lack of editor feedback meant the visual quality was entirely dependent on them.

> At the [*New York*] *Times*, you have to have a certain standard for yourself, because you want to keep getting work from the *Times*. You have to keep making good work every time even though there's essentially no feedback, so the quality of the image is mostly determined by yourself rather than the relationship with the editor, or, maybe it's determined by the lack of a relationship. (Freelancer 13)

Altered news values.   Compared to staffers who earn an annual salary, freelancers' by-the-hour or by-the-day rate has influenced editors to prefer professionalism and a hassle-free interaction rather than the technical or aesthetic quality of their freelancers' visuals. Some staffers have the flexibility of returning to work on a story if they do not think it is finished while freelancers often only have a single shot to tell a person or event's story. Four of the six photo editors interviewed said they valued professionalism over aesthetics.

> A lot of times, people will say, "Oh, yeah. There's this photographer, but they're a pain in the ass to work with," so, depending on, if it's a smaller thing, you just want pumped out, a lot of people will move toward something that's not quite as good but that they will know there'll be no drama and they'll get what they need when they need it. If it's something bigger, then editors are more willing to put up with assholes or jerks. But, for the most part, 75 percent of the time, editors will choose the photographer that's easier to work with or that is better at all the non-tangibles than the rockstar who's a jerk. (Photo editor 3)

Thus, ego and eccentricity seems best suited for in-person interactions where the situation can be resolved dynamically based on the unique characteristics of those involved rather than in mediated environments where scripts dominate and decrease flexibility and patience.

Discussion

The freelancer model in the digital age has transformed the visual journalism industry, its values, priorities, and organizational structure. In the staffer model, the communication path was hierarchical where photographers interacted directly with their editors, received feedback, guidance, and critique from them, and, through development and training, symbiotically benefited the organization and themselves. In the freelance model, however, this once-hierarchical communication structure has become more linear, where the overwhelming majority of freelancers are now turning to fellow photographers for editing advice and critique. Freelancers' interactions with editors are largely one-sided,

and transactional rather than relational, unless they have developed a personal connection with them in the physical world. For the photographers who have developed such a relationship, their interactions are mutually contingent and rewarding.

The post-digital freelancer model offers the possibility of greater exposure to editors and thus a greater likelihood of being discovered and tapped for assignments, especially through geo-location-based visual talent apps, such as Blink. However, mediated communication between editors and freelancers severely limits the quality and quantity of inter-actions and almost always forces freelancers to look elsewhere for feedback and self-development opportunities.

The growing number of freelancers who accept responsibility for and initiate, at their own expense, their own learning and professional development opportunities, such as paying editors for consulting work or paying to attend portfolio reviews or workshops, evidences self-directed learning theory at play. This goes hand-in-hand with the idea that "for most photographers, learning comes through doing" (Freelancer 1) and that formal education is one of only several options for learning. The freelance photojournalist model can be democratizing but only for those who are self-sufficient and resource-rich. Talent is nothing without the camera equipment, photo hardware and software, archiving solutions, insurance, and transportation costs that freelancers must bear up-front before netting assignments. The work they do is often at a cost and in the hopes of gaining exposure and opportunity rather than providing a sustainable living wage. The model's primary advantage is the diversity of the talent pool from which photo editors can select photographers. The competitiveness of the market, too, helps boost the quality of the visuals but it also undercuts the value of a freelancer's work.

Limitations

Like the photojournalism industry itself (Hadland, Campbell, and Lambert 2015), the study's sample skewed White and male. Though past research (Scandura and Williams 2001) has identified differences in how same-sex and cross-gender supervisors mentor, more research is needed to determine if and how other demographic characteristics, such as sexuality, or life experiences, such as working in international environments, influence the mentoring and development process. Though the study included responses from seven individuals who had worked or lived internationally, they had all worked in the United States in addition to other countries, so further research on freelancers or photo editors who have never lived or worked in another country is needed to determine how conventions differ in non-US environments. Likewise, since the vast majority of those interviewed were straight, more research is needed to determine how and if LGBTQ individuals mentor or are mentored differently compared to their straight counterparts.

Opportunities for Future Research

Two primary opportunities for future research exist. The first would be to find former freelance photojournalists who have left the field and pursued other work or to incorporate perspectives from the remaining staff photographers at media outlets. Interviewing either group would provide even more insight into the freelancer model and its sustainability.

The second concerns the area of freelance photojournalists who specialize in video production. The majority of the respondents in this sample were still photographers; however, one

Los Angeles-based photographer also derives about half his income from video production and mentioned how different the editing process was for video compared to still photography. With stills, feedback, while potentially helpful to the photographers' development, is not necessarily required. Video, though, is a much more fluid medium with endless options for sequencing clips. Because the editing is not as simple as "drag and drop" like it is for stills and because the raw footage can be too cumbersome to digitally transmit, the content creator, that is, the freelancer, has to make the edits at the request of the editor(s). Thus, feedback might be a more integral aspect to video freelancing and deserves further study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

NOTES

1. According to a *Wall Street Journal* photo editor interviewed for the study.
2. See Appendix C for a description of the visual departments at each media outlet.
3. Respondents were randomly assigned numbers to ensure confidentiality. See Appendices A and B for generic descriptions of the respondents' demographic characteristics.

REFERENCES

Allan, Stuart. 2015. "Introduction: Photojournalism and Citizen Journalism." *Digital Journalism* 3 (4): 467–476. doi:10.1080/21670811.2015.1034542.

Anderson, Monica. 2013. "At Newspapers, Photographers Feel the Brunt of Job Cuts." Pew Research Center. http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/11/11/at-newspapers-photographers-feel-the-brunt-of-job-cuts/.

ASNE. 2015. *Table L - Employment of Men and Women by Job Category*. Columbia, MO: American Society of News Editors. http://asne.org/content.asp?pl=140&sl=144&contentid=144.

Bethune, Beverly. 1984. "A Sociological Profile of the Daily Newspaper Photographer." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 61 (3): 606–743.

Bierema, Laura L., and Sharan B. Merriam. 2002. "E-mentoring: Using Computer Mediated Communication to Enhance the Mentoring Process." *Innovative Higher Education* 26 (3): 211–227.

Biernacki, Patrick, and Dan Waldorf. 1981. "Snowball Sampling: Problems and Techniques of Chain Referral sampling." *Sociological Methods & Research* 10 (2): 141–163.

Bleyer, Archie, and Ronald Barr. 2009, June. "Cancer in Young Adults 20 to 39 years of Age: Overview." *Seminars in Oncology* 36 (3): 194–206. WB Saunders.

Bragg, Ann K. 1976. "The Socialization Process in Higher Education." ERIC/Higher Education Research Report No. 7.

Dalton, Gene W., Paul H. Thompson, and Raymond L. Price. 1977. "The Four Stages of Professional Careers— A New Look at Performance by Professionals." *Organizational Dynamics* 6 (1): 19–42.

Danis, Claudia. 1992. "A Unifying Framework for Data-based Research into Adult Self-directed Learning." In *Self-Directed Learning: Application and Research*, edited by H. Long and Associates, 47–72. Norman, OK: Oklahoma Research Center for Continuing Professional and Higher Education, University of Oklahoma.

Dorfman, John. 2002. "Digital Dangers: The New Forces that Threaten Photojournalism." *Columbia Journalism Review* 41 (2): 60–63.

Ensher, Ellen A., Christian Heun, and Anita Blanchard. 2003. "Online Mentoring and Computer-Mediated Communication: New Directions in Research." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 63 (2): 264–288.

Ensher, Ellen A., and Susan E. Murphy. 2007. "E-mentoring: Next Generation Research Strategies and Suggestions." In *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research, and Practice*, edited by Belle Rose Ragins and Kathy E. Kram, 299–322. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Gillath, Omri, Cade McCall, Phillip R. Shaver, and Jim Blascovich. 2008. "What can Virtual Reality Teach us about Prosocial Tendencies in Real and Virtual Environments?" *Media Psychology* 11 (2): 259–282.

Glaser, Barney G., and Anselm L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing.

Goldenberg, Dolly, and Carroll Iwasiw. 1993. "Professional Socialisation of Nursing Students as an Outcome of a Senior Clinical Preceptorship Experience." *Nurse Education Today* 13 (1): 3–15.

Green, Francis. 2006. *Demanding Work: The Paradox of Job Quality in the Affluent Economy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Greenwood, Keith, and Scott Reinardy. 2011. "Self-trained and Self-motivated: Newspaper Photojournalists Strive for Quality During Technological Challenges." *Visual Communication Quarterly* 18 (3): 155–166.

Hadland, Adrian, David Campbell, and Paul Lambert. 2015. *The State of News Photography: The Lives and Livelihoods of Photojournalists in the Digital Age*.

Hamilton, Betti A., and Terri A. Scandura. 2003. "E-Mentoring: Implications for Organizational Learning and Development in a Wired World." *Organizational Dynamics* 31 (4): 388–402.

Heller, Robert. 1991. "Photojournalism Education: Contradictions for the Nineties." *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 46 (1): 29–31.

Hesmondhalgh, David, and Sarah Baker. 2011. *Creative Labour: Media work in Three Cultural Industries*. New York: Routledge.

Horrell, William. 1961. "Journalism Teaching–A Forum for AEJ Members: The Status of Education for Photojournalism." *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 38 (2): 213–220.

Kanter, Rosabeth M. 1977. *Women and Men of the Corporation*. New York: Basic.

Kenney, Keith. 1987. "Photojournalism Education Growing in Chinese Schools." *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 42 (3): 19–21.

Klein-Avraham, Inbal, and Zvi Reich. 2014. "Out of the Frame: A Longitudinal Perspective on Digitization and Professional Photojournalism." *New Media & Society*. doi:10.1177/1461444814545289.

Knowles, Malcolm S. 1975. *Self-directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers*. New York: Association Press.

Kram, Kathy E. 1988. *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life*. Lanham: University Press of America.

Levinson, Daniel J. 1978. *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. New York: Random House Publishing Group.

Lewis, Catherine C. 2002. *Lesson Study: A Handbook of Teacher-led Instructional Change*. Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools.

Lewis, Seth C., Kelly Kaufhold, and Dominic L. Lasorsa. 2010. "Thinking about Citizen Journalism: The Philosophical and Practical Challenges of User-generated Content for Community Newspapers." *Journalism Practice* 4 (2): 163–179. doi:10.1080/14616700903156919.

Merriam, Sharan B. 2001. "Andragogy and Self-Directed Learning: Pillars of Adult Learning Theory." *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 2001 (89): 3–14.

Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. New York: Sage.

Morse, Janice M., Michael Barrett, Maria Mayan, Karin Olson, and Jude Spiers. 2002. "Verification Strategies for Establishing Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 1 (2): 13–22.

Newton, Julianne. 2013. *The Burden of Visual Truth: The Role of Photojournalism in Mediating Reality*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Nolan, David S. 2012. "Decisive Moments and Decisive Change: Veteran Photojournalist Perspectives on Changes in Learning and Practice." Doctoral diss., Texas State University-San Marcos.

Osterreicher, Mickey. 2016. *An Interview with Mickey Osterreicher, General Counsel of the NPPA/ Interviewer: M. Zhang*. Berkeley, CA: PetaPixel.

Patton, Michael Q. 2005. *Qualitative Research*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Ragins, Belle Rose, and Kathy E. Kram. 2007. *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Russial, John. 2000. "How Digital Imaging Changes Work of Photojournalists." *Newspaper Research Journal* 21 (2): 67–83.

Russial, John, and Wayne Wanta. 1998. "Digital Imaging Skills and the Hiring and Training of Photojournalists." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 75 (3): 593–605.

Sandelowski, Margarete. 1991. "Telling Stories: Narrative Approaches in Qualitative Research." *Image: The Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 23 (3): 161–166.

Scandura, Terri A., and Ethlyn A Williams. 2001. "An Investigation of the Moderating Effects of Gender on the Relationships Between Mentorship Initiation and Protégé Perceptions of Mentoring Functions." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 59 (3): 342–363.

Shapiro, Eileen C., Florence P. Haseltine, and Mary P. Rowe. 1978. "Moving Up: Role Models, Mentors, and the Patron System." *Sloan Management Review* 19 (3): 51–58.

Shoemaker, Pamela. 2013. *Mediating the Message in the 21st Century: A Media Sociology Perspective*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.

Siegelbaum, Sasu, and Ryan J. Thomas. 2016. "Putting the Work (Back) into Newswork: Searching for the Sources of Normative Failure." *Journalism Practice* 10 (3): 387–404. doi:10.1080/17512786.2015.1025415.

Small, Mario L. 2009. "'How many Cases do I Need?': On Science and the Logic of case Selection in Field-based Research." *Ethnography* 10 (1): 5–38.

Smith, Gerry. 2015. "Dow Jones Seen Firing Workers as WSJ Ad Revenue Declines." *Bloomberg Business*.

Smith, Zoe, and Andrew Mendelson. 1996. "Visual Communication Education: Cause for Concern or Bright Future?" *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 51 (3): 66–73.

Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. 1998. "Basics of Qualitative Research: Procedures and Techniques for Developing Grounded Theory".

Tough, Allen M. 1979. *The Adult's Learning Projects: A Fresh Approach to Theory and Practice in Adult Learning, Vol. 1. (1)*. 2nd ed. Austin, Tex: Learning Concepts.

"Who Pays Photographers (And How Much)." 2016. *Format*. https://www.format.com/magazine/articles/who-pays-photographers-jobs.

Workman, Michael, William Kahnweiler, and William Bommer. 2003. "The Effects of Cognitive Style and Media Richness on Commitment to Telework and Virtual Teams." *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 63 (2): 199–219.

Yin, Robert K. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Vol. 5*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

T. J. Thomson, School of Journalism, University of Missouri, USA. E-mail: contact@tjthomson.com

Appendix A

Characteristics of Freelance Photojournalist Respondents

Number	Age	Gender	Race/ethnicity	Nationality	Sexuality	Years spent in the visual news industry
1	25	Male	White	American	Straight	5
2	28	Male	White	American	Straight	7
3	24	Male	White	Ukrainian	Straight	7
4	27	Male	White	American	Straight	5
5	27	Male	White	American	Straight	4
6	33	Male	White	American	Straight	4
7	32	Male	Hispanic/Latino	Mexican	Straight	8
8	28	Female	Arab	Palestinian	Straight	4
9	30	Male	White	American	Straight	7
10	40	Female	White	American	Straight	11
11	25	Female	White	American	Straight	5
12	40	Female	Hispanic/Latina	Mexican	Straight	16
13	33	Male	White	American	Straight	10
14	24	Male	White	American	Straight	2
15	26	Female	White	American	Straight	6
16	22	Male	White	South African	Straight	2
17	26	Male	White	American	Straight	8
18	25	Male	White	American	Straight	4
19	35	Male	Hispanic/Latino	Mexican	Straight	5

Appendix B

Characteristics of Photo Editor Respondents

Number	Age	Gender	Race/ethnicity	Nationality	Sexuality	Years spent in the visual news industry
1	45	Male	American	American	Straight	13
2	37	Male	American	American	Straight	10
3	28	Male	Asian	Chinese	Straight	4
4	25	Female	American	American	Straight	2
5	58	Female	American	American	Straight	28
6	49	Female	Asian	Chinese	Gay	19

Appendix C

Characteristics of Visual Departments at Major US Media Outlets

Name of outlet	Number of photo editors	Percentage of visuals generated by freelancers	Is post-shoot feedback given?
The New York Times	52	50 or more	No
The Wall Street Journal	24 (15 in news; 8 in features; and one Director of Photography (DoP))	33 for news imagery; 66 for features imagery	No, unless the freelancer asks a specific question or unless the editor has a personal relationship with the freelancer
The Washington Post	19 (including DoP and deputy DoP)	80 for international news; 50 for political news; between 60 and 80 for national news	No, unless the editor has a personal relationship with the photographer
The Los Angeles Times	15	10	No
RollingStone.com	6	50 or more	No
Mashable.com	3 (including DoP)	20	Yes